

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 10, 2009

The Honorable Daniel Inouye  
Chairman

Subcommittee on Defense

Senate Appropriations Committee

Senate Dirksen Office Building, Room 122

Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Vice Chairman

Subcommittee on Defense

Senate Appropriations Committee

Senate Dirksen Office Building, Room 122

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Inouye and Senator Cochran:

As the Committee begins its consideration of the Fiscal Year 2010 Defense Appropriations Bill, we are writing to urge that the committee appropriate at least \$67.5 million in fiscal year 2010 for HMMWV ("Humvee") maintenance performed at the Army National Guard Readiness Sustainment Maintenance Site located in Limestone, Maine (RSMS). This appropriation for the National Guard facility, also known as Maine Military Authority (MMA), will ensure the delivery of quality fighting vehicles to meet National Guard requirements for Humvees, leverage and ensure the viability of an extraordinary team of craftsman and a cost-efficient production facility, and prevent the layoff of 175 employees in a region already suffering from the enormous weight of the ongoing recession.

In brief, there are at least 1,500 Humvees, the current annual throughput of Humvees at MMA, which have been identified by the Army National Guard for maintenance at MMA and can be executed in fiscal year 2010. While the requirement exists to maintain these vehicles, the Army National Guard has been constrained in its ability to budget the full amount of \$67.5 million to conduct the maintenance on these vehicles in fiscal year 2010. With only \$30 million budgeted for this program in the coming fiscal year, production throughput at MMA will be cut by more than half to only 700 Humvees next year. The result will be dramatic consequences for the Nation's Guard, the facility, and the region's economy.

Through hard work and the innovations of skilled and talented craftsman of the MMA team, the Army National Guard has an extraordinary maintenance facility at its Limestone RSMS. The facility is a leader in cost, schedule and performance, and routinely exceeds the expectations of its program managers and customers. Labor hours on Humvees, for example, have decreased in the last three years from 380 hours per vehicle to 250 hours per vehicle – a reduction of over 34%. And quality performance continues with MMA's warranty rate at only 2.69%. Further, the Limestone RSMS is well known, and praised, by program managers for always delivering Humvees within budget.

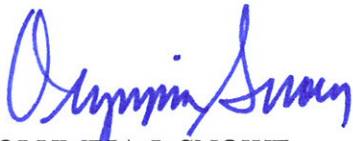
The implications of cutting production by more than half are enormous. First, and most importantly, the National Guard facility would have to lay off as many as 175 full-time employees by September 30, 2009, from a team that totals 380 employees today. Second, the reduction would significantly degrade MMA's procurement methods, production line set-up, inventory system, and production techniques. Given such negative consequences, we are, quite frankly, stunned that such a reduction in throughput at MMA would merit serious consideration, let alone be planned for implementation.

The nearly 50 percent cut in the MMA workforce that would result from the planned fiscal year 2010 budget would be as devastating to the regional economy as it would be to the capabilities of the National Guard facility. The residents of Aroostook County, Maine, from which MMA draws its proud and dedicated team members, are facing enormous hardships from the historic economic recession. Since December 2007, over 1,100 jobs have been eliminated in this region of Northern Maine, driving the unemployment rate to 11.3%, which is well above the national unemployment rate of 9.5%. Eliminating 175 jobs at MMA would increase employment losses in Aroostook County by another 15%, exacerbating the impact of the recession and greatly prolonging any chance for meaningful recovery in this rural area of the United States.

For nearly 13 years, the Army National Guard has relied on its Readiness Sustainment Maintenance Site at Limestone, Maine, to provide a dependable service to the warfighters. Similarly, MMA has been a source of economic stability for Northern Maine. By appropriating \$67.5 million for fiscal year 2010 for the Limestone RSMS, this important resource of both the National Guard and the state of Maine can be safeguarded from the continuing uncertainties of these economic times, and ensure that MMA's valued workforce and valued product remain available for the requirements of our service members.

Of course, we certify that neither we nor our immediate family has a pecuniary interest in any congressionally directed spending item that we have requested, including this request, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 9 of Rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate. We further certify that we have posted a description of this request on our official websites, along with the accompanying justification.

Sincerely,



OLYMPIA J. SNOWE  
United States Senator



SUSAN M. COLLINS  
United States Senator